

PRAKRIT AVVO

Although interjections and exclamations occupy an understandably minor place in the study of Middle Indo-Aryan dialects, they are not without their difficulties. For not only is there often uncertainty about their precise semantic significance but, in addition, the interdependence and mutual conditioning of these words can make an accurate unravelling of their etymology and relationship to each other extremely awkward¹. Tempting though it is to regard all exclamations as basically onomatopoeic, Thieme has shown that for at least one Indo-Aryan example a cogent derivation can be made². This short paper has been prompted by one such word, the Prākṛit exclamation *avvo*.

The grammarian Vararuci glosses *avvo* at *Prākṛitaparakāśa*³ 9.10 stating that it is used « in the sense of distress, indication or reflection » (*duḥkhasūcanāsaṃbhāvanāṣu*). Hemacandra in his Prākṛit grammar⁴ 2.204 expands this considerably: « *avvo* is used in the sense of indicating, distress, (in) conversation, (with regard to) an offence, (in the sense of) astonishment, joy, respect, fear, vexation, depression or repentance » (*avvo sūcanāduḥkhasaṃbhāṣaṇāparādhavismayānandādarabhayakhedaviśādapaścāttāpe*). The tenth-century lexicographer Dhanapāla in his *Pāiyalacchī*⁵ verse 275 glosses *avvo* by *kheyāisu*, « in the sense of vexation etc. » while the glossary (s.v.) states « interject. ho. ». The *Pāiasadda-mahaṇṇavo*⁶ (s.v.) repeats Hemacandra's gloss while Ratnachandraji,

1. COLLETTE CAILLAT, *Pour une Nouvelle Grammaire du Pāli*, Torino, 1970, pp. 18-9.

2. PAUL THIEME, *Der Fremdling im RgVeda*, Leipzig, 1938, pp. 3-6, for observations on *are* and *re*.

3. Ed. P. L. Vaidya, Poona, 1931.

4. Ed. R. Pischel, Halle, 1877.

5. Ed. G. Bühler, Göttingen, 1879.

6. Ed. Hargovind Das T. Sheth, Varanasi, 1963.

Ardha-Māgadhī Dictionary⁷ (s.v.) states that the word occurs in the *Supārśvanāthacarita* as « a particle expressing sorrow ».

avvo is not infrequent in Prākṛit literature, although it is often only possible to assign meaning to it on the basis of the context of the passages in which it occurs. A verse in the *Vasudevahiṇḍī*⁸ describes eight Jaina monks sitting at the bottom of a *kapistha* tree and being struck by falling fruit: *avvo 'tti vāharanti hasanti ca sīsā*, « they said *avvo* and their pupils laughed at them ». The *Sattasāi*⁹ contains several examples of *avvo* (verses 273, 306, 475, 536, 581, 746, 748 corrupt: *abbo*, 821, 892 and 910), all occurring in verses in which the speaker refers to a (generally unhappy) love affair, with the exception of verse 821 which I quote:

*avvo ṇa āmi chettaṃ khajjau sālī vi kīraṇivahehiṃ
jāṇaṃtā avi pahīā pucchamti puṇo puṇo maggaṃ*

« *avvo!* I'm not going to the field! Let the rice be eaten by the swarms of insects! The travellers, although they know it, continually ask me the way ».

The commentators on the *Sattasāi* gloss the occurrences of *avvo* in the anthology variously: *duḥkhasūcanāyām*, *āścaryacamatkāre*, *kaṣṭe*, *sambuddhiduḥkhaḥ*, *khede*.

The word also occurs in Koṭhala's (9th century?) *Māhārāṣṭrī kāvya*, the *Līlāvai*¹⁰, verse 464: *paricimtiy' amhi avvo katto sā mayanabānata-viyaṃgī*, « I thought, "avvo! where is she, tormented by love's arrows?" » Jayasimhasūri (9th century), in a version of the well-known story of Mūladeva contained in his *Dharmopadeśamālāvivaraṇa*¹¹ employs *avvo* several times. On being dragged from under the courtesan Devadattā's bed by his rival Ayala, Mūladeva tells him to do as he wishes to which Ayala replies (p. 103, line 22): *avvo, mahāṇubhāvo eso*, « *avvo*, this is a noble man ». After being released by Ayala, Mūladeva reflects (p. 103, line 28): *avvo kahaṃ appaṇaṃ paccōggayaayasakalaṃkiyaṃ nāyayaṇaṃ dāyemi*, « *avvo!* how can I show myself, stained by my present shame, to the city people? ». When, before entering the forest, he sees a *dhakka* brahman, Mūladeva says (p. 103, line 31): *avvo imassa sambalen' āhaṃ pi mahāḍaviṃ laṃghissāmi*, « *avvo!* I will get through the forest by means of this man's provisions ». At the end of the journey, Mūladeva, who has not received any food from the brahman, exclaims (p. 104, line 3-4): *avvo eyassa mahāṇubhāvassa āsāe mae adavi volīṇā*, « *avvo!* I crossed the forest hoping (to get something) from this generous man ». When he sees a Jaina monk, Mūladeva says (p. 104, lines 7-8): *avvo bahupunnāpāvaṇiijjo esa mahappā visesao māsapāraṇae*, « *avvo!* the

7. Ajmer, 1923.

8. Quoted by J. C. JAIN, *The Vasudevahiṇḍī, an Authentic Jaina Version of the Bṛhatkathā*, Ahmedabad, 1977, p. 215.

9. Ed. A. Weber, Leipzig, 1881.

10. Ed. A. N. Upadhye, Bombay, 1966.

11. Ed. L. B. Gandhi, Bombay, 1949.

noble man is full of holiness, especially at the end of a month-long fast ». Finally, meeting Ayala again, Mūladeva thinks (p. 105, line 24): *avvo katth' ittha Ayalo*, « *avvo!* how is Ayala here? ».

avvo is also found in Apabhraṃśa. The tenth-century writer Puṣpa-danta employs it in his *Nāyakumāracarīu*¹² while it also occurs in Soma-prabha's *Kumārāpālāpratibodha*¹³. No doubt other occurrences of the form could be adduced.

The interlocking relationship of Middle Indo-Aryan exclamations dictates that *avvo* cannot be considered in isolation from other forms of a similar nature. The ending *-o* is found in exclamations such as *āmo*, *ambho*, *hambho*, and *bho*¹⁴ and is presumably derived from *-aḥ*¹⁵. However, a simple comparison with *āmo*, *ambho* etc. cannot provide a full explanation for the origin of *avvo*. According to the Critical Pāli Dictionary (s.v.), *ambho* is « a particle of exclamation (1) used to attract attention, (2) in the sense of reproach, rejection or warning, (3) sometimes expressive of appreciation or admiration ». I take this form to be an expansion of *āma/āmo*, « an interjection of assent or recollection, "yes", "indeed" »¹⁶, the equivalent of Sanskrit *ām*, « an interjection of assent or recollection »¹⁷. While it might be possible to derive *avvo* from *āmo* if a development of *-m->-v-*¹⁸ with compensatory gemination was assumed, the word has a broader field of semantic significance than mere « affirmation or assent », as an examination of the grammarian's glosses and the examples given above will show.

It seems worthwhile to broaden this consideration of exclamation to include a form similar to *āma/āmo* but clearly different in meaning, namely, *ammo*. Charpentier, commenting on *Uttarajjhayaṇasutta* 19.10¹⁹, mentions Pischel's view that *ammo* contains the particle *u* but himself suggests that the « curious vocative » is an old dual **ammāu*, « father and mother ». In fact, a cursory examination of a few examples demonstrates that *ammo* is a vocative with the sense of « O mother! », the ending *-o* no doubt occurring by analogy with other Middle Indo-Aryan exclamations. In the *Uvāsagadasāo*²⁰, a man addresses his mother (pp. 78-9): *evaṃ khalv ammo na jāṇāmi*, « truly, mother, I do not know ». In the

12. Ed. Hiralal Jain, Berar, 1937, glossary (s.v.).

13. Ed. Ludwig Alsdorf, Hamburg, 1928, p. 141. Cf. the latish Kathākośa ed. I. Hoffman, Munich, 1974, p. 11, for the same verse.

14. Note also Māgadhi *haṃgho* discussed by G. ROTH, *Beiträge zur Indienforschung*, Berlin, 1977, pp. 424-30, and Pāli *abbhu*, the opposite of *bho* and « an interjection expressive of "aversion" » (Critical Pāli Dictionary s.v. *abbhuṃ*).

15. Critical Pāli Dictionary s.v. *āma* regards *āmo* as an extended form of *āma* and compares the alternations *no* : *na* and *atho* : *atha*.

16. Critical Pāli Dictionary s.v.

17. M. MONIER-WILLIAMS, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* s.v.

18. For *-m->-v-* see R. PISCHEL, *A Comparative Grammar of the Prākṛit Languages*, 1965, paragraph 251.

19. The *Uttarādhyaṇasūtra* ed. Jarl Charpentier, Upssala, 1922, p. 348.

20. Ed. R. Hoernle, Calcutta, 1890.

*Vasudevahiṇḍi*²¹, a boy addresses his mother (p. 11, line 17): *ammo ajuttam bhe jānamāṇehim kayam ti*, « mother, you have acted wrongly in full knowledge »; a cow is spoken to by her calf (p. 13, lines 16-17): *teṇa vaccheṇa māṇusivāyāe bhaṇiyā gāvī, ammo eso ko vi puriso amejjha-littam se pāyam me uvarim phusati*, « the cow was addressed by the calf in human speech, "Mother, this man is rubbing his filthy foot on me" »; a girl addresses her mother (p. 32, lines 9-10): *māyā ya ṇāe bhaṇiyā ammo ānehi tāva alattayam*, « she addressed her mother, "Mother, bring me the lac" ». In one of the *Āvaśyaka* stories²², a boy speaks to his mother: *kim ammo ruṇyasi*, « why are you weeping, mother? ». In his *ṛtti* on the *Ākhyānikamaṇikoṣa*²³ of Nemicandra, the twelfth-century write Āmradeva employs the word *ammo* when a daughter is addressing her mother (p. 40, verse 65)²⁴.

The possibility of a connection between the exclamation *avvo* and the vocative *ammo* is given greater weight by adducing the well-attested Dravidian forms *avva* used in the sense of « mother, grandmother, old woman »²⁵ and *ammā*, « mother, matron, lady; exclamation of pity, surprise or joy »²⁶. Without attempting to delineate in a precise manner the relationship between these forms, it nevertheless seems reasonable to suggest that there was originally a Middle Indo-Aryan vocative **avva* « O mother! » (cf. Pāli *amma*) which was « conditioned », to use Caillat's expression, by the group of interjections *āmo*, *ambho* etc. A development from an original specialised sense of « mother » to the broad spectrum of meaning given by Hemacandra and apparent in our examples may seem unlikely but, in fact, the invoking of one's mother to convey alarm, distress or astonishment is not unknown in other languages. A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary Volume II²⁷ states that « mother » can be used as an exclamation of surprise, dismay etc. Compare also the Italian *mamma mia*, « goodness gracious! »²⁸.

It might be thought worth considering whether *avvo* ever occurs with the same concrete vocative sense as *ammo*. The *Sattasāi*, which

21. Ed. Caturvijaya and Puṇyavijaya, Bhāvnagar, 1930.

22. E. LEUMANN, *Die Āvaśyaka Erzählungen*, Leipzig, 1897, p. 13, line 33.

23. Ed. Puṇyavijayaṇi, Vārāṇasī, 1962.

24. Note in addition *Vasudevahiṇḍi*, p. 46 line 11: *sā vi ya Sāmadattā oyāriyā rahāto paḍiyā ammopāesuṇi*, « S. was helped down from the chariot and fell at her mother's feet ». It is unclear whether *ammo* here is a genuine stem form or a simple misprint.

25. BURROW and EMENEAU, *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*, Oxford, 1961, paragraph 232.

26. *Ibid.*, paragraph 154, where a comparison is made with Sanskrit *ambā* and the Prākṛit interjection of surprise, *ammo/ammahe* although, according to the *Paia-saddamahāṇavo*, the evidence for the latter form seems to derive solely from Hemacandra's grammar and the dramatic Prākṛits, a notoriously unreliable source. WEBER, ZDMG 27, 1874, p. 416, mentions some Dravidian parallels in the sense of « father » provided by Stevenson.

27. Oxford, 1976, p. 1048, s.v. mother.

28. *Cambridge Italian Dictionary*, Cambridge, 1962, s.v. *mamma*.

contains several examples of the word, is a text traditionally associated with the Deccan, the intersecting point of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian culture, and the poets of the anthology might be expected to have been sensitive to the Dravidian word *avva*. Kinship terms are of some importance in the *Sattasāi*, often helping to define the emotional context of a verse²⁹, and most of the verses in which *avvo* occurs are very similar in tone to those in which a girl addresses her mother or an older, more experienced confidante (the terms of address generally being *māe*, « mother! », *māuā*, « mothers! », *māmi*, « auntie! ») about some problem which is vexing her. However, the occurrence of *avvo* followed by a masculine vocation in verse 273³⁰ shows that in one verse at least the word can only be an exclamation. Nevertheless, the chronology and circumstances of the composition of the *Sattasāi* are still fairly obscure and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that some of the verses preserve the original vocative sense of *avvo*.

29. Compare especially verses in which the brother-in-law (*deara*) and the mother-in-law (*attā*) are participants.

30. *avvo dukkaraāraa puṇo vi tattiṇ karesi gamaṇassa*

ajja vi na hoṇṭi saralā veṇiā taramgiṇo cihurā

« *avvo!* doer of the difficult! you are preoccupied with going off again. Even on this day, the dishevelled hair of my braid does not become straight ».